

Message Text

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51

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 OMB-01 SAM-01 SAJ-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10 ACDA-05 (ISO) W

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R 200758Z MAY 75

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5065

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 5586

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CH US CB UR

SUBJ: PEOPLE'S DAILY ON ANNIVERSARY OF MAO'S MAY 20TH STATEMENT

SUMMARY: A PEOPLE'S DAILY EDITORIAL MARKING THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF MAO'S 1970 MAY 20TH STATEMENT CRITICIZING US INTERVENTION IN CAMBODIA BROADENS THE ORIGINAL TARGET OF THE CHAIRMAN TO ENCOMPASS THE SOVIET UNION AND HEGEMONISM. THIS TREATMENT SEEMS INDICATIVE OF THE ADJUSTMENT THE PRC FACES IN UNDRESSING RECENT COMMUNIST VICTORIES AND THE US DEFEAT IN INDOCHINA. END SUMMARY

1. A PEOPLE'S DAILY EDITORIAL MARKING THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF MAO'S 1970 MAY 20TH STATEMENT CRITICIZING US INTERVENTION IN CAMBODIA SPEAKS OF THE US AS "DEFEATEE" AND TURNS ON THE SOVIETS AS THE REMAINING TARGET OF STRUGGLE. THE EDITORIAL SEEMS YET ANOTHER RECENT SIGN OF HEIGHTENED PRC CONCERN WITH INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPANDED SOVIET INFLUENCE IN ASIA. THE US DEFEAT IS SEEN AS BEARING OUT PRC PRESENT CONTENTIONS THAT THE SUPERPOWERS (BOTH THE US AND THE USSR)

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ARE BY NATURE WEAK AND DECLINING AND MAO'S 1970 DICTUM THAT

"A SMALL NATION CAN DEFEAT A LARGER ONE, A JUST WAR ENJOYS JUST SUPPORT", ETC. INDEED THE EDITORIAL SUGGESTS THAT THE CHINESE CONSIDER THE PROBLEMS STEMMING FROM US INTERVENTION IN ASIA NOW ARE A MATTER OF HISTORY, WHILE THE SOVIETS ARE THE REMAINING CONCERN. THE EDITORIAL EXPLICITLY DECLARIES THAT THE SOVIETS CAN SIMILARLY BE DEFEATED".

2. THE EDITORIAL SKIRTS A NUMBER OF ISSUES ADDRESSED IN THE EARLIER MAO STATEMENT. MAO'S ASSERTION THAT THE US IS A "PAPER TIGER" IS IMMITTED AND THERE ARE RELATIVELY FEW SPECIFIC REFERENCES TO THE CURRENT SITUATION IN INDOCHINA. THERE IS ALSO NO REPETITION OF MAO'S 1970 STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR SIHANOUK AS HEAD OF STATE, PERHAPS IN VIEW OF SIHANOUK'S UNCERTAIN ROLE IN THE NEW CAMBODIA REGIME. THE EDITORIAL NOTES THE LAO PEOPLE'S "IMPORTANT VICTORIES" IN THEIR STRUGGLE TO "OUST THE ULTRA REACTIONARIES AND THE US NEO-COLONIALISTS", WHILE THE MAJOR COMMUNIST VICTORY IN VIETNAM RECEIVES BARE MENTION.

3. THERE IS NO REITERATION OF THE 1970 CALL FOR ACTION; RATHER, THE EDITORIAL REFLECTS PEKING'S APPARENT APPRECIATION OF THE NEED FOR CAUTION. IT DECLARES THAT MAO'S STATEMENT "FULLY EXPRESSES" THE CHINESE PEOPLE'S PRINCIPLED STAND OF SUPPORT FOR REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE. UNLIKE THE 1970 STATEMENT, THE EDITORIAL OMITS ANY REFERENCE TO STRUGGLE IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES, KOREA, JAPAN, ETC. CONCLUDING ON A MORE SOLEMN AND SOMBER NOTE, IT STATES THAT "NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS IN THE WORLD" CHINA WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALISM, COLONIALISM, AND HEGEMONISM, SUGGESTING THAT PEKING IS LOOKING AHEAD-- PERHAPS TO THE ADJUSTMENTS CHINA LIKE OTHER ASIAN NATIONS MUST MAKE IN THE LIGHT OF THE NEW SITUATION IN INDOCHINA AND GROWING SOVIET INTEREST IN THE AREA.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, FOREIGN RELATIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975HONGK05586
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750177-0387
From: HONG KONG
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750536/aaaabgpn.tel
Line Count: 95
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 JUN 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <22 OCT 2003 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PEOPLE'S DAILY ON ANNIVERSARY OF MAO'S MAY 20TH STATEMENT SUMMARY: A PEOPLE'S DAILY EDITORIAL MARKING THE FIFTH ANNIVER-
TAGS: PFOR, CH, US, CB, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006